584 to *tjekela*. You must wait for fine weather, otherwise it is an
574 insult to the future father-in-law.
784 5) If, during the visit, you eat monkey nuts, you must not
262 take off the thin skin which covers the kernel.

6) The suitor—the owner of the oxen—must not eat black fish that day. Only his friends have the right to do so. These fish, a kind of barbel, are to be found in the lakes (as that of Rikatla) and in the Nkomati river. The suitor will not partake of them for fear lest the girl he wishes to marry should slip through his hands like a fish. Moreover this fish is black: it might bring darkness, unhappiness.

7) Neither must he eat honey during his visit, because honey like the black fish, is slippery... Honey flows...

8) He is also forbidden to eat fowls, because cocks and hens scratch the soil with their claws, scattering it about; thus the marriage " might be scattered (hangalasa bukati) before it is ripe ". In the Tembe clans, formerly, any solid food was taboo until the families had killed an ox for the feasts.

These taboos are not the proper taboos of a marginal period, as if the betrothal were considered as one of these periods. They are family taboos, belonging to the category of those dictated by the mutual distrust of two allied families.

585 The wedding feast consists of two parts: the *lobola feast*, viz. all the ceremonies connected with the remittance of the lobolo which takes place at the bride's village, and the *tlhoma*, viz. the bringing the bride to the bridegroom's village. Should the lobolo have been entirely paid at once, these two ceremonies will follow each other without much delay. If the sum of money or the number of oxen is not complete, the *tlhoma* will very probably be postponed.

4) Lobola feast.

a) Preparations.

585 On both sides, the friends are informed that the feast is close
273 at hand. The bride's family in particular must prepare in good time, as they have to provide the beer which will be consumed in

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585 great quantities. The brewing requires several days. All the
273 relations of the young girl agree on a day to begin operations in the several villages they inhabit. First of all the grains must be taken out of all the mealie spikes which were kept in the small cellar huts (ku hula). The following day these mealie seeds are steeped in cold water, in large pots. When they have become sufficiently soft, they are pounded (kandja) in wooden mortars, the yeast of millet is added (kandela) and the preparation is then boiled (pseka). On the day of the boiling, the family of the fiancé is informed that the next day the beer will be drained off and that on the following day the wedding will begin.

585 That same day the bridegroom with his friends goes to his future parents-in-law. He does not find his sweetheart there; she has wisely been hidden in the neighbourhood. He brings with him a goat which will subsequently play an important part in the proceedings. The next day the whole family of the fiancé assembles and makes sure that the provision of hoes or the number of pounds sterling for the lobolo is complete. The third day they all start.

b) The assault of the village.

Let us describe this most curious feature of the feast as it took place forty years ago, when English gold was not yet known in the country, and when the price of a wife was paid in hoes. These hoes, to the number of forty or fifty, were distributed among the relatives, who carried them on their heads. In a long row, they wind along the path. When they approach close to the bride's village, most of them sit down in the shade, whilst a few young men go on before to make the assault. The bride's brothers guard the doors of the circular thorny fence which generally surrounds the villages. Provided with their sticks, they try to prevent the aggressors from entering. In vain! The assailants leap here and there in the bush, hurl themselves over the barriers, are pursued by the sentinels, run across the square, and try to steal pitchers of beer, whilst the boys of the village hit them as hard as they can.

Taking advantage of this tumult the older men arrive, and

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585 pointing with their fingers to the hoes they carry on their heads, they murmur the following words : " Here is our ox! It does not know how to drink! It does not know how to drink! (Homu a yi nwi! a yi nwi!)" The others rush towards them, and try to steal their burdens and to bar the way ; all this goes on amidst laughter, and until one of the old people of the bride's village says : " Let us leave them! (A hi ba tjikene!)" Then the company enters, laden with the precious hoes.

c) The counting of the lobolo.

585 4/12 The implements are deposited in the centre of the square and fixed into the ground by tens. The hoes used by the Thongas, whether of Native or European make, are lengthened and pointed in such a way that they can be introduced into a wooden handle, something like the tools of the lake dwellers. They have a very remote resemblance to an ace of spades with a pointed shaft.

585 The bride's family gathers to ascertain if the number agreed upon is there. They remark to one another that there are so and so many of them. " Look, they say, they have paid such and such a lobolo. (Labisan ba lobolile ha kukari.) " It is very important that there should be a large number of witnesses, for who knows to how many discussions and quarrels these hoes will give rise if the marriage turns out badly ? When this counting is done, all hearts being gladdened by the sight of the wealth which will eventually allow the bride's brother to get married himself, the jugs of beer, which were brought the day before by the aunts, sisters, and relations of the bride, are fetched in. They pass from one hand to another ; the old people, and the men, prefer going into a hut, where they talk over the latest news whilst they quench their thirst.

d) The wedding procession.

Whilst the old people rest, a goat is taken for the sacrifice and slaughtered at the door of the hut of the bride's mother. Whilst the goat is being cut into pieces, the bridegroom's sisters, the big

585 girls, the stout women with strong arms, go and look for the
578 heroine of the day, who is hidden in a hut in one of the neighbouring villages, and who has not yet been seen. At last they succeed in finding her. She refuses to come. The viragos seize her and pull her out by force. Everybody assembles. She is covered with a large cloth which hides her from the gaze of the bystanders. Surrounded on all sides, she sets forward to the village, the crowd forming a kind of procession. " Let us accompany her, then we shall return home " sing the women who bring her. (A hi mu tjekeleni, hi ta muka). This song of the *tjeka*, the only one which is peculiar to the wedding day, is the prelude to a most strange duel.

The bridegroom's family stands on one side, that of the bride on the other, and then begins the exchange of equivocal compliments.

"Ha!" cry the groomsmen to the bride, "as you are becoming the wife of our brother and coming into our village, try and leave all your vices outside. Do not steal any longer! Forsake your bad ways and become a good girl! "

To this the bride's relatives shout in return :

" You have nothing to boast about! Stop wearying the people! She is far too good for you! Does not everybody know the wild pranks of your son and the dishonour of your family! "

And they go on in this way, at first in joke, but often speaking seriously. They sometimes even go so far as to bombard each other with the half digested matter which has been extracted from the goat's stomach, but, if anyone goes too far and exceeds the recognized limit of insult, the old people will tell him to be quiet.

585 These proceedings however are looked upon as a game and are
535 accompanied with a particular dance called *khana* which consists in jumping first on one leg and then on the other, gesticulating at the same time.

e) The religious act.

585 The procession reaches the hut of the bride's mother, where
782 the goat was killed. Mats are stretched outside. The bride and
769 groom sit down on the finest of these. It is now that the father

585 performs the religious rite (hahla). He takes between his first
782 finger and thumb a small quantity of the half digested grass which
769 has been taken from the paunch of the animal, makes a little ball of it, touches his tongue with it and emits a sound resembling " tsu "... as if he were slightly spitting. This is the customary sacramental act in most of the sacrifices. (See Part VI.) He stands behind the wedding pair and, looking straight in front of him towards them, speaks to the gods, that is to say to the spirits of his ancestors, and says : " My fathers, my grandfathers (he calls them by their names) look! To-day my child is leaving me. She enters the wedded life (bukatin). Look at her, accompany her where she will live. May she also found a village, may she have many children (mu nyikan timbeleko), may she be happy, good and just. May she be on good terms with those with whom she will be ". Here it may happen that a brother of the bridegroom will interrupt and say : " Yes, we will live peacefully with her if she does her duty well and does not worry her husband ". The old man goes on with his patriarchal prayer without taking any notice of the interruption and everybody listens quietly and attentively. This prayer which he pronounces with his eyes wide open and in a most natural manner is sometimes very long. When the people have had enough of it and wish him to stop, they send a young man to cut a piece of meat and to put it into the old man's mouth. Thus they " cut " his prayer and he keeps still. The person officiating must be the first to partake of the meat of the sacrifice.

f) The symbolical belt.

585 The astragalus (nhlolo) of the right leg of the sacrificed goat
777 has been carefully kept. All along the belly they cut a strip
825 of skin reaching as far as the neck and up to the chin, which is cut so as to form a kind of pocket at the end of the strip. The astragalus is put into this pocket and the father ties the belt around the waist of the young woman. He must not look at her face to face in doing this. On the contrary, she must turn her

585 777 825 back to him. This is doubtless done to wish her good luck and so that she may have many descendants. Natives have a special veneration for the astragalus bone which is also used in the divinatory system.

5) The tlhoma, departure of the bride for the conjugal dwelling.

585 If the lobolo business has been duly concluded, the bride will start on the following day for the conjugal dwelling, accompanied by her friends. (1) The next day, she will be joined by the women of her village, who will help her to erect the wood pile (ku koroka shigiyane). They will all go together into the bush to cut a large quantity of branches, and will pile them up between two poles covered with ochre in the bride's village. Each of the husband's relations will take one of these logs during the following months. It is, it seems, a symbolic present from one family to the other.

As for the wood cutters, they take their leave and go home. But what a surprise! Here is the bride going with them! Her sisters are taking her home again! The husband entreats, but in vain! He pursues the woman who, two days before, became his legal wife. To no purpose! He offers her a present to induce her to stay with him. She refuses... This was foreseen ; she must go to her mother to fetch her basket (shihundju), her mat, her spoon and other utensils which make up her small trousseau. A last lesson must also be given to the husband : " If we have given you our daughter, do not believe that we have had enough of her! (hi kolile). She is very precious to us and we take her back! "

Patience! To morrow she will come back accompanied by one young girl only who helps to carry her furniture. This

(1) It is taboo for the bride's parents to keep their daughter in their village when the lobolo has been entirely delivered ; because, should the bride die with them, they would have to return all the cattle, whilst if she dies in the husband's village, the consequences will not be so dreadful (See Part I. Ch. II. C.).

585 time it is for good! At last! " Ba mu tlhomile! " that is to say : her parents have duly settled her in her home.

In Nondwane this last surprise is spared the bridegroom. The bride comes to his home on the day of the marriage with her two mats, accompanied by a young girl only, and some days later the mother and female relations bring the rest of her trousseau and erect the wood pile. The young bride, when she has definitely accepted her fate and consented to stay, is called *ntlhoñwa* (Ro.) *nhlomi* (Dj.) (the one who has been brought to her husband). During the first week, she will fill all the pots of the people of the village so that when they awake they will find water for their ablutions and say : " We have found a bride ! (He kumi ntlhoñwa!) " ; she will remove all the ashes from the fire-places, and smear all the huts.

The first night when she sleeps in the hut with her husband, she may refuse to allow him his conjugal rights. The bridegroom then goes to his father and asks him what he ought to do under the circumstances. The father says : " Give her sixpence or a shilling. " Then she consents! (Mboza).

Marriage customs in other Ronga clans.

The description which we have just given may be considered as typical, but there are many variations to be noticed amongst the clans.

584 836 574 In the *Mapatju* country, South of Delagoa Bay, there are two informal visits, one of the fiancé, one of the fiancée, to each other's village (ku bona muti). This visit is very short, and they do not accept any food from their hosts. Then the *tjekela* of the boys (the betrothal visit) takes place. They behave in a very dignified manner, do not accept any food the first day and consent to eat on the following day only after having been presented with a gift of 10/ or £ 1! During this visit the girls put 500 reis or sixpence at the bottom of the pots which they fill with water for the ablutions of the boys, otherwise the visitors would say : " The water is too cold. We cannot use it. " Sexual

584 836 574 relations between boys and girls during these visits were not allowed in former times. Nowadays they are indulged in, and it may be that the fiancé will ask his fiancée to give herself to him " to test her love " (ku kamba lirandju). If she refuses, the whole affair may be compromised.

584 574 When the girls go to *tjekela* in their turn, they also observe great formality. Money must be given at least ten times to obtain their consent :

1) They refuse to enter the village.
2) To leave the square and go to the hut.
3) To cross the door of the hut.
4) To sit down on the mats. When the other girls consent, the fiancée remains standing.
5) She consents to sit down when given a shilling.
6) They refuse to answer the greetings.
7) When the others have answered, the fiancée still refuses to do so.
8) They do not consent to give news of their home.
9, 10) They still make difficulties about accepting food.

It may be that the fiancé goes to work in the mines during this period, probably in order to complete his lobolo. When he comes back, a special ceremony is performed which is called *hlomula mutwa*, to remove the thorn. The girls pay him a visit. He sits down amidst his companions, having fixed in his hair a long white thorn made of bone. The shangwane of the fiancée (chief bridesmaid) approaches him, dancing, and removes it. This is a way of saluting him on his return, it means the removal of the fatigue and the sufferings he has undergone, of the thorns which have wounded him.

585 The concluding ceremonies of *thloma* and of the *shigiyane* are also more developed in the Maputju country and in Nondwane. This is the custom in *Nondwane*. Girls accompany the new bride to the conjugal home. They go to the bush to which she has fled, capture her there, and bring her to her husband with songs of mourning (hi ku djila nwana). " Where are you going ? You go to a husband whose heart is jealous! You will bring a

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585 basket full of mealies to crush : they will say it is but a handful! You will learn to steal and to bewitch (viz. they will accuse you of doing it). " The bride covers her head with a piece of clothing and weeps. So the sad procession reaches the door of the hut of the husband's mother. There the bride sits down. The husband sits near her, but she withdraws from him. Then the men of the village insult her and say : " Come near him "! The old women, the husband's aunts, come and try to remove the veil from her head : " Take it away that we may see you " they say! Two days later they will come again and give her sixpence to take away the clothing with which she has covered her breast, and then she will go about the village in the ordinary dress—or undress.

The building of the wood pile in *Maputju* is also very characteristic. The ceremony takes place on the day of the *tlhoma*. When the procession is heard coming, far away, the friends of the new husband go to meet it. But the girls who accompany the bride refuse to approach the village. They must be enticed by money ; money at each crossway, at the door, in the village square, at the entrance of the hut, etc., money to put down the logs they bring, the pots of beer they carry... And when all the women have consented to unload themselves, the chief bridesmaid still refuses to do so, and must be induced to by a larger sum of money! When they have arranged the wood pile, they dance behind it, hiding the bride in their midst. The husband and his friends are sitting on the other side of the pile. Three girls come closer to them, always dancing. One of them is the shangwane. She puts tobacco into the hand of the bride. Then the bride kneels down before her husband at a little distance and stretches out her hand to offer him snuff. He rises to receive it, but, when he has approached quite close to her and has taken a little of the tobacco between his fingers, she throws the remainder of the snuff into his eyes ; then she runs away pursued by the husband's friends. If she is swift enough, she succeeds in taking hold of a tuft of grass outside the village. Then no one dares to catch her. It will be necessary to bring more money to induce her to relinquish her hold on the grass. After this, she re-enters the village which will be her new abode, and this is really the end!

584 before this feast takes place, six days later, the girl and her friends go to the young man's village to return the visit. The fiancée has been warned by her mother to be very cautious, not to accept the proposals of her suitor too readily. Boys and girls enjoy themselves thoroughly. A goat is killed for them, a goat called *the feather* because it is as it were a feather in the fiancée's hair, " a feather in her cap "!

The action of lobola follows immediately. The girls have stayed three days and gone home. Six had elapsed before they came. This makes nine days, just enough for the brewing of the beer. It is prepared in the girl's village. All the suitor's family make for it, driving the herd of cattle, fifteen head strong, which is the lobola money. The sham-fight takes place, some of the invaders, the young ones, going steadily forward, the others, the adults, hiding behind the oxen and urging them on under a shower of blows. Huts are offered to the visitors. One is especially reserved for the great *mukoñwana*, the man who has married the fiancé's sister, and whose oxen are used to buy the bride of the day. He has come to see where *his* oxen go. In the evening the girls choose their *shigango*. The next morning they will fetch water for their ablutions. This is the day when the lobolo is officially remitted by one family to the other. Long discussions take place through the intermediary of the two ntjumi, at the end of which the male relations of the bride leave their hut to inspect the cattle and criticise them, the others endeavouring to emphasise their beauty. Two oxen have been killed for the feast, one brought by the fiancé, another provided by the father of the fiancée. Dancing and singing goes on the whole afternoon ; the visitors go home at sunset ; the girls accompany them and tie knots of grass where they part.

585 A month after the lobola ceremony a new feast takes place, called *the beer which washes the hoofs of the oxen*. The fiancée, together with the women of the family, (not only the girls), bring pots of beer to the husband's village. They stay outside. When the inhabitants ask them to enter, they run back some distance and only consent on being urged... and so on! The fiancée does not put down the pot she carries until her suitor has brought a

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585 578 goat. Shillings must be given to induce her to enter the hut, to sit down, to accept water for washing her hands and food, to eat. Another ox is killed and the meat is divided as follows : the liver and the heart are for the bride's father, the leg for her mother, the *nyimba*, viz. the womb, which includes the ribs, sternum etc. for the maternal uncle. The women, when they return home, take all these pieces of meat to their several destinations. They put a skewer through the heart and liver and stick it into the ground before the bride's father's hut saying : " This is the notification of the husband's people. "

If the total number of the oxen has been remitted on the lobola day, *the departure of the new wife* for the husband's kraal (thloma) will not be long delayed. But should there be some oxen wanting, a wise father will not allow her to go until the whole lobolo has been paid. The husband works hard to get together the other oxen. He brings them, without ceremony, together with a sovereign, which he places before the bride's father as a present, saying : " This is my spitting for you, my father ! " He does the same for the mother. He now feels the right to claim his wife. They answer : " Give us time to prepare her trousseau." The trousseau consists of two mats, two or three big spoons, some pots, a wooden platter, a pestle and a mortar, and one hoe provided by the maternal uncle, which make up all the equipment of a Nkuna bride. All her female relations meet and, after having exhorted (1) her to be obedient, to accept all the hardships she will find in her new home, they accompany her to her husband's village. This is the *hloma*. The men do not go, except the ntjumi of the bride's family. The father, on the morning before they leave, kills a fowl and *hahla*, viz. makes a sacrifice, telling his ancestors that his daughter goes to be married, and praying for her. The ntjumi,

585 562 593 (1) " Hear ! " the old women say to the bride, " you have been a good girl, so far, henceforth you will be treated as a slave ! You will be accused of adultery and of witchcraft. You will have no more happiness. But accept all that ! They will beat you, kill you and we shall not be able to deliver you, because we have eaten their oxen. " These exhortations are worth reproducing, as they show clearly the conditions under which the girl goes to her husband. She is not protected by the lobolo. On the contrary, the lobolo has made her the possession of the husband's family, from whom she must now accept any treatment. (See Part II).

585/378 immediately after his arrival, goes to the husband and to his assembled relatives and tells them roughly : " Here we are ; we bring you your dog. Here it is. With us, she was reputed to be a good girl. Now we shall hear you every day say that she is lazy, does not know how to cook, has a host of lovers... All right! Kill her! Kill your dog! Have you not bought it ? She is a witch! Let her drink the magic philter, etc. " The men keep silent... " Yes, you are right. We shall beat her. But if her husband is too hard on her, we shall try to deliver her. We shall do our best to protect her ".

In the meantime the women cut the logs of the *shigwana*, and fill the pots with water, and the feast goes on, another ox having been killed by the husband. The married pair sit on a mat and the women of the two families begin the mutual exchange of insults which are never wanting on this day! " You dogs! " one of the aunts of the girl will say, " people of no consequence! You have not even a broken pot to remove the ashes from the fireplace. You can congratulate yourselves on getting such a good wife as this, a hard worker, a splendid cook, a nice and honest girl. " An old woman of the other party answers : " Yes! If you have exhorted her sufficiently! Perhaps she will give up her bad ways, her laziness, etc... "—" Bad ways ? You may well speak of that! Look at your son! What was he? A wild beast! We have come to cut off his tail and make a man of him! "

V. *Marriage by abduction.*

588/373 The [illegible] ceremonies which we have described belong to the legal marriage (ku teka, ku lobola). But there exists another way of getting a wife, and the poor (psisiwana), those who have no oxen, no pounds sterling for lobola, especially if they have no energy, have recourse to this method. It is called *ku tlhuba*. A young man in such a position, wishing to marry such and such a girl, will send a friend to her and propose a rendez-vous in the

583 the wife's group, offering a higher bride-price in order to obtain the
591 transfer of the bride to her suitor's home.
176 Now, if this is the history of the evolution of the Bantu marriage (and we shall see later on, in studying the relation of the uterine nephew with his mother's brother, that it is quite probable that it is), we may find, in comparing these two forms of marriage, the explanation of some of the Thonga rites. The position of the wife was certainly much more satisfactory, from her point of view, under the old system. She could remain with her people and her husband had but little power over her, whilst, in the marriage of dominion, she must stay in the village of another group, work for it, and perhaps be ill-treated. Does this fact not account for her flight to the bush or to another village the day before hloma, when the female relatives of the husband go and seize her by force ? She tries to hide herself under a veil, as if she wished not to be recognised; but the husband's aunts remorselessly take it from her, and as she goes to the conjugal dwelling, her friends accompany her, singing songs of mourning. These rites are certainly more readily explained if there was, in a remote past, entirely forgotten by individuals, yet still influencing the mind of the community, another state of things, when the married woman was much freer and more happy.

585 3) We find the explanation of some other ceremonies when we apply to them the theory of the *Rites of passage*. For both bridegroom and bride, there is in fact passage to a new condition of life. They pass from the position of single to that of married persons. Hence the part taken by their best friends and by the bridesmaids, from whom they are separated by their marriage. For the bride there is passage from one family to another, from one village to another.

I cannot say that I have found distinct *separation* and *marginal* rites, but aggregation rites are numerous. The *aggregation rites* are first of all the common participation in the flesh of the oxen during the feasts. Nothing makes Natives more friendly towards each other than to eat meat together. Then come the building of the wood pile, the girl's acts of civility to the husband's friends during the *tjekela* and the day after the *hloma*. These rites being collective seem to represent the union of the two families. The new wife performs them herself individually during the first week of her marriage.

584 How is it possible to explain the calculated resistance to acts of politeness on the part of both male and female visitors during the betrothal ceremonies, and even later on ? If the girls alone made a difficulty about entering the village, the hut, and sitting down on the

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561 a rite of passage and this is also proved by the fact that the money or the
731 bracelets given to the persons concerned do not remain their property.
As regards the circumcised, they remit them to the chief, and the chief distributes them to the old women who are no longer able to bear children. The girl who has passed through the khomba gives them to her adopted mother, who will use them in the same way. All the money remitted to the bride will go to the master of the village, for the old women and the children. *Married people must have no share in it*, as these presents are taboo. Why ? Because they are connected with a passage, and people who have sexual relations are considered as increasing the dangers connected with these critical phases of human development, when the heart is troubled by a half-conscious fear of a new and unknown future. Amongst civilised people who have reached the era of individualism, these fears find their expression in songs and poetry. In the communistic society they express themselves by means of rites.

* * *

571 Here are some answers to the questions of Professor Frazer on
587 marriage.
611 A man always brings his wife to his own home. This is the *tlhoma*, and it is a law. It is taboo for him to go and live with his parents-in- law, at any rate when he marries his first wife. In the course of time, when the children have grown up, when the *bukoñwana*, viz. the relations with parents-in-law, are of old standing, a man can go and live in his wife's village (See Part II). Another case in which this can be done is when a widow refuses to marry the man who legally inherits her, and gives herself to a stranger, a man of Inhambane, for instance. He does not pay the lobolo, and lives with her in her village ; but the children born of that union will belong to the family of the deceased husband.
585 There is no preparation for marriage amongst the Thongas by fasting, bleeding or keeping awake the night before. No corn or rice is thrown at the bridal pair. The bride or bridegroom is never represented at the marriage by a proxy or dummy. Conjugal relations begin immediately after marriage (see page 113), but the wife does not possess her home and her kitchen for the first year ; during that period she must cook for her mother-in-law.
583 There are no occasions on which men exchange their wives.
See practical conclusions on Marriage Rites at the end of Vol. I.

Nubile girls during their "tiweti" must approach the
284 *oxen kraal* and look at them. The cattle might suffer, be attacked
825 by a bad cough (mukhulwane), get thin! This taboo is instituted
562 to protect the oxen, not the human inhabitants of the village, as D.
Kidd says is the case amongst the Zulus. (Part IV. Ch. I. E.)
262 When women have passed the time of child-bearing, most of
886 the taboos cease, and they can eat monkeys and porcupine if
they wish!

3) The first year of married life.

581 I shall not return to the subject of marriage rites, which have
562 been fully explained in the preceding chapter. Let me say that,
though a Thonga woman cannot imagine life without marriage (ku
kandja bukati), she does not enter on the new state with any
enthusiasm. Her parents have warned her that she will be
illtreated, accused of witchcraft and adultery, etc. Her sisters
bewail her fate on her wedding day in song. The fact that she
has been paid for, though it does not constitute an actual sale,
puts her in an inferior position (See Part II).

562 During the first year, she has no *ndangu*, viz. no fire-place of
264 her own. She cooks for her mother-in-law. During the three
585 first weeks the husband eats with her and with the girl who
accompanied her to her new home. Afterwards, he goes back
to eat with the men. In some places it would seem that the
husband eats with her the whole year, until she has her own pot
(hlembeto).

4) Husband and wife.

593 What are the relations between husband and wife after the
571 honey-moon? Of course they vary very much according to
517 the character of both. As a rule however, the married people
have very little intimacy with each other; the man remains
with his companions on the "bandla," the village square where
they meet, and only occasionally comes into the "ndangu," the
reed enclosure of the fire-place; which is the true domain of the

777 from you... In the same manner, do not prepare the skin for
784 the child before it is born. Your wife would not bring forth a human being. Should you transgress this rule, you would bring misfortune on yourself (wa tihlolela, wa singita), and on your family. If you go to Moneri (the missionary) and ask him for a skin for this purpose before the birth of your child, he will tell you it is so." Note the deep-rooted conviction of the old heathen, who appeals to the authority of the missionary to strengthen the taboo!

585 10. Later on, when you are married, you must avoid eating
784 honey with your wife for a whole year, till she has had a child.
777 The bride is allowed to eat honey at her parent's home, but not in
262 her new domicile and with her husband. The husband can eat it in the bush, but he must wash his hands when he comes back, lest his wife should notice it. She would run home if she knew of it. We have already met with this prohibition in the tjekela visit, and heard the reason for it : honey flows ; the bride would go! The explanation now given is this : honey is too sweet, and your bride is too sweet also. (Is it not your honey-moon or honey-year ?) The two things do not go together. (Psa yalana, they hate each other.) A third reason is this : Bees, when they have eaten their honey, fly away from the hive. So would your wife do... After a year this misfortune is no longer to be feared.

606 This last idea is very curious. It shows that the bukoñwana
581 taboos *decrease in severity as time passes*. The strained relations between the son-in-law and his wife's mother also become easier. He begins to call her mamana, and she calls him ñwana. This transformation even goes so far that in some cases a mukoñwana can go and dwell in his parents-in-law's village, especially if he has children and if the children are grown up. And this fact gives us the natural explanation of these curious rules.

Marriage, as we have seen, is not an individual affair in the collective stage of family life. It is a contract made between two groups, which enter by it into a special relation towards each other. This relation is fraught with danger, because the interests of both groups are involved ; a bride and bridegroom are inspired with a mutual feeling of fear, knowing that an

III. *Matriarchy.*

178 602 But as regards *mother-right* and the *uterine family*, I must confess that I have altered my views since writing Les Ba-Ronga, and would testify my gratitude to Mr. S. Hartland, who encouraged me to study this subject more attentively. I had not then gathered all the facts, and the identity of the *ntukulu* and the *mupsyana* only became clearly apparent to me when studying the Northern clans. Now, having inquired with special care into this most curious feature of the Thonga system, I have come to the conclusion that the most probable explanation is that, in former and very remote times, our tribe passed through the matriarchal stage. Let us carefully consider the relation of a malume with his uterine nephews, recapitulating all the facts.

1) Duties and rights of the maternal uncle.

604 391 As we have seen, the uterine nephew all through his career is the object of special care on the part of his uncle: if he is a first-born child, the malume prepares his ntehe. (See page 46.) When weaned, he goes to stay in the village of his mother's relatives for many years, a girl sometimes till she is grown up. 604 Later on, when she marries, the maternal uncle claims a right 583 called *tjhumba*, £ 1, on the total amount of the lobolo. It is taboo to refuse it; should a father dare to keep that £ 1, his brothers will say to him: "Do you not fear the gods? The mother's gods will kill you! Your daughter will have no children. Did you alone bring her into the world? Did not these people help you in bringing her forth? And has not your wife grown with the assistance of those gods? Her brother must be allowed to have his *tjhumba*" (Mboza).

585 604 On the day of the remittance of the lobolo, the maternal uncle and all the mother's relatives are invited to the feast, and for them a special part of the festal ox is reserved, called *ngimba*, viz. the

604 womb, the uterus ; this consists not only of that organ, but of the
585 whole belly, from the sternum to the hind legs ; the bride's mother eats the *mbata* and *khondjo*, viz. the extremity of the spine (Mboza).

585 On the day of hlomisa, when the bride is led to her husband's
431 village, her maternal relatives receive a special gift, a young cow called *mubya wa mana wa yena*, i. e. the skin in which her mother carried her on her shoulders when she was a baby. This cow will be sent to the family when the first and the third daughter marry. In the case of a second and fourth girl, the nyimba alone is sent.

585 In the *equipment of the bride*, the mother's relatives provide
604 her with a hoe, with fat to anoint her body, with a mat and clothing and sometimes with bracelets. The paternal aunt (hahana) does not give anything, neither does the paternal uncle, the latter only helping the father occasionally. Should the mother's relatives not fulfil this duty of providing part of the trousseau, next time they will not be given the *nyimba* to which they were entitled (Viguet).

593 But the most characteristic prerogative of the bamalume or
602 bakokwana, is *their special right of intercession* on behalf of the
604 uterine nephews. In fact, as Mankhelu said in his picturesque language, "as regards sacrifices (timhamba), the mother's relatives mostly perform them. They are the stem. My father is the stem as regards the oxen, but my mother is the true stem ; she is the god ; she makes me grow. Should she die when I am an infant, I shall not live. The village of my mother is as the home of the gods (ka mamana hi ko psikwembyen)." Simeon Gana added : "We have the special charge of sacrificing for our batukulu ; our sons also are priests to them, and can officiate in our place, even should they be younger than our batukulu. That is the reason why we do not marry them. We are their elders (bakulu)." Of course the bones will always be consulted and they will tell if a sacrifice must be offered to the gods of the mother or to those of the father, but a kokwane will preferably be called upon to sacrifice for a sick child. (See Part VI. Chap. II, II.)

604 In the ceremonies following death, especially in the feast of
611 the mourning beer (page 164), the malume will be the officiating person and squeeze the *psanyi* over his batukulu to cleanse them.

A last right possessed by the malume is that *of raising his village*

361 together with all the inhabitants of the kraal. The two huts near
313 the entrance are, on the left, the *lao*, where unmarried boys sleep
396 (14) and on the right (15) the *nhangu* where the girls live. Often
356 the nhangu is built behind the huts of the mothers, near the mhala ; in this way the girls are kept under more effective watch. The boys of the *lao* have to guard the door, which they close at night where it is the custom to do so. The *hubo* and the *bandla*, the squares, are generally kept quite clean.

361 In front of each hut is a *yard* (*ndangu* pl. *mindangu*, 23) which
372 is also generally well swept. In the centre of each of these are
417 some broken pots (mapseko), or pieces of hard clay taken from
351 ant-hills (psirubu) ; this is the *fireplace (shitiko)*, where the mistress of the hut cooks her food. The fence round the yard used, as a rule, to be made of poles or even trunks of trees planted near each other and forming a circular wall. Nowadays, especially amongst the Rongas, these yards are enclosed with reeds and may be built square, a single wall fencing off as many as three or four huts. The top of this wall is sometimes crenelated. I rather think this arrangement is modern ; the circular wall of the ndangu
585 is an old custom, as is proved by the following fact. On the day of
338 *hloma*, when the bride's-maids and female relatives bring the bride to her husband, they not only build up the woodpile (shigiyane, see page 112), but, in the northern clans, they must also erect a new ndangu which will be called *tsandana*, and so people will know that in the yard there is a *nhlomi*, a bride, working for her mother-in-law! The ndangu is the place where women tell folk-tales of the tribe to the children and to each other, whilst they attend to their cooking, or after the evening meal.

361 If cleanliness prevails on the square and in the yards, the
356 same cannot be said of the region between the huts and the
235 fence. This is called *mahosi* or *makotini*. It is the place where
351 old baskets and broken pots are kept. The chicken houses
343 (*shihahlu*, 27) are built there ; these are generally little huts, with reed walls, placed on a floor of palmtree boards, supported by four poles forked at their upper extremities. The *ash-heaps* are somewhat further on (24). They are called *tala*, and play a part in certain rites, representing, as it would seem, the place of desolation and of sorrow.

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643 585 of Mpfumo are notified when it is sufficiently fermented : the latter then mobilise their military contingent, consisting of a picked battalion of youths and men wearing the wax-crown. They are magnificently attired in skins of civet-cat and other warlike apparel, but carry sticks only and small toy shields (mahahu), as the object of the expedition is eminently peaceful and entirely actuated by friendship. They go first to the house of their Agent General, Mambene, where they are met and conducted to the capital, taking with them the money and oxen which must be handed over to the parents of the princess. The curious sham-fight, details of which we have already given when describing ordinary marriages, also takes place on this occasion, the Matjolos trying to carry off the oxen and the Mpfumos defending themselves and endeavouring to appropriate the jugs of beer which are in the capital. This mock engagement is fairly lively, sticks are wielded with some force and the blows fall heavily until a few wounds are apparent and a little blood is let, when hostilities are at once stopped and friendship reigns supreme.

643 585 186 The money and oxen are given to Sigaole, chief of Matjolo, in the presence of witnesses. Mpfumo kills a bull for Matjolo and Matjolo slaughters a cow for Mpfumo, without any kind of religious ceremony : a sacrifice has previously been offered in Matjolo to propitiate their gods in favour of Mimalengane. On the other hand the young folks of the two countries execute the dances peculiar to each clan, trying to outrival one another, for the honour of their country. The guests pass one night at the capital of Matjolo and return to their homes the following day.

643 585 The relatives of the bride prepare her trousseau, which is not much richer than in the case of ordinary people ; a *ngula*, large basket, in which are placed some maize and other cereals which she will plant in her new home, sundry cooking utensils, saucepans, winnowing baskets, a hoe, an axe ; on the subsequent day, all the women accompany her to her husband's dwelling and then go to perform the ceremony of building the wood pile (p. 112). They are regaled with a couple of oxen and return to their home.

The chief's wife is not compelled, as are young married women generally, to live with the mother-in-law and to wait upon her

643 during the whole of the first year of married life. The chief, 383 immediately on the home-coming of his bride, calls together his 644 young men, who rapidly build for him a new village, his village, which will henceforth become the capital of the country and will be given a distinctive name.

Nwamantibyane's royal kraal was known as Hlanzini, and he had chosen a site for it on the confines of the Nwamba country in order to avoid a too close proximity to the Portuguese Commandant living at Hangwana.

Crowned, married, installed in his new residence, the chief has now nothing to do but reign.

* * *

643 Mankhelu relates the proceedings of the official marriage
584 amongst the Ba-Nkuna in the following manner: All the
622 principal headmen send an ox to the capital, assemble there, kill one of the oxen, eat it and discuss who shall be the "wife of the country (1)." They ask the chief: "Whom do you love?" He answers: "The daughter of such and such a chief." They go to the father of this girl and say: "Eat the lobolo and give your daughter to the chief." The man may refuse. Should he consent, the girl will become the wife of the country: "the earth has bought her;" she will give birth to the future chief.

Should a great number of oxen be provided by the country, those which are in excess of the lobola price will go with the chief and princess to their new village "in order to provide milk for them."

(1) In the case of Muhlaba, Mankhelu himself received the fifteen oxen of the lobolo of the village and kept them for a time. Other subjects had given £ 1, a hoe, a goat, or nothing, if they could not afford to contribute. Nobody refused, but some had nothing to give! No matter! In the meantime one of the oxen broke its leg. The mother of Muhlaba said to Mankhelu: "See! the oxen of the lobolo die. Take a wife for the chief." Muhlaba was consulted and chose a girl from the Makaringe clan. Mankhelu had already taken a wife amongst these people, who were consequently his bakokwana. He went to them with the proposal; they consented. Then Muhlaba accompanied Mankhelu on a second visit to the Makaringe people, who killed an ox for him and helped him to eat it!

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000 it, as the Churches of all the Continents are. Is not the Church abandoning its true domain in taking circumcision under its patronage ? The operation is no doubt hygienic in most cases. Surgeons sometimes deem it necessary to prevent complications. It seems therefore more natural to leave circumcision to the province of medicine rather than to impose it as a collective rite on all Christian boys. I think that a deeper study of the question is necessary.

III. ON MARRIAGE CUSTOMS AND LOBOLA

(See p. 125 and 282).

177 What will be the fate of all these very picturesque marriage customs
386 with the advent of civilisation ? Let us notice that amongst Christian converts, many of them have been abandoned as a matter of course, the bad habits of tjekela, the assault on the village, the preparation of beer, for instance. The part played by adult go-betweens is sometimes taken over by the elders of the Church, but often young people do not care for interference and conduct their own business.

Some other rites are preserved ; the feast, of course, is amongst these, and we see boys ruining themselves in order to prepare a glorious wedding with splendid costumes and abundance of meat. On this point they are rather too conservative!

The religious ceremony has now become the Christian blessing which has taken the place of the heathen sacrifice to the ancestors ; it is followed generally by a procession of the best men and the bridesmaids singing popular hymns, sometimes very solemnly worded, songs of repentance for instance, as they march to and fro in the nuptial village ; the women, even the men, of the two families hurling at each other's heads amenities of the same kind as in former times. This is a most peculiar mixture of the old and new elements and often filled us with wonder (See Zidji, p. 212). I think however that these rites are doomed to die out, because Christian marriage is no longer a collective act, but has been individualised together with the many other acts of social life. It remains a social act indeed, but an act accomplished by two individuals on their own responsibility and in mutual love. "Ceci tuera cela." This Christian or Western individualism will kill primitive
000 collectivism and all its rites. However original and interesting the marriage ceremonies may be amongst the Bantus, I do not think they

train was heard in the distance. One of my servants was busy cleaning the pots ; I heard him muttering the following words : 195

The one who roars in the distance... The one who crushes in pieces the braves and smashes them ! The one who debauches our wives : they abandon us, they go (to the towns to lead a bad life) ! The seducer ! And we remain alone.

He was extolling the huge thing and lamenting his misfortune and the curse it has brought upon the country.

IV. *Satiric poetry.*

I have already mentioned the peculiar custom of Thonga literati of speaking in a round-about fashion, and using figurative language, especially when they want to say something disagreeable or to give vent to their humour. It is but one step from such forms to satire. They generally indulge in this satiric vein when dealing with relatives-in-law, women being especially prone to it. When the sisters and aunts of a married woman go to pay a visit to her, they convey all kinds of equivocal compliments. These must not be taken seriously! It is a round-about — exceedingly round-about — way of making graceful allusions and expressing their mutual esteem. I will quote the series of these songs of friendly chaff and invective as it was given to me by Shigiyane, with a running commentary to render them comprehensible. These lively and pointed choruses give a fitting finishing-touch to the marriage customs, and illustrate the curious relations existing between allied families, which I explained in Vol. I, p. 249-253. 533 195 574 576 539

On the wedding day the women who take the bride to her husband sing the *tjeka song* : 585 533 539

Let us go with her, but let us go back to our homes !

This is an ironical way of saying : "She is going to find trouble : we won't follow her as far as that !." The same idea runs through all the songs which these women sing during the next few days.

585 When they accompany the bride to her new home, they sing :

533 U ya kwi, Mamano ! — Whither goest thou, mother ?
539 U ya kwi shana ? — Whither goest thou ?
574 Ba ta tshaha shihundju ni lihlelo, mamano !
They will bring thee the basket full of maize and the fan, my mother !
Ba ta kuma u tlokoli, ba tlokolisa, mamano !
When thou hast finished crushing it, they will make thee crush it again, my mother !
Ba ta kuma u kopoli, ba kopolisa, mamano !
When thou hast plastered the floor, they will make thee plaster it again, my mother !

But when they come on a visit, carrying jars of beer as presents to the newly married couple, they are much less guarded in their language, ridiculing the poor husband and his family, and making fun of every one in general. They begin singing on the way, with the jars on their heads :

He ntshonga, banhwanyana, he nga batjanana
He la libango ; fa hi nga labi, we manyana.
Ku laba manyana ka fwan'a manyana.
We are a small band, young girls ; there are few of us.
We are looking for a piece of meat on the spit ; formerly we should not have known where to find any, our sister (so and so) !
Now our sister will get some for us from her husband !

Hi kokobisa lobe, hi ya kwihi shana ?
Hi bhanu ba ku yalwa !
He fambaka ni khombo, ni khombo dji le kaya !
Where are we going, thus dragging the hook behind us ? (1)
We are the people that are hated.
We walk in misfortune (2), the misfortune that has befallen our house !

Ka ku kandja fwana a ku na kule.
Wo khunga he lihanyi, we koko !
Ya kokowela : kowe-kowe-kowe.
Where a daughter lives it cannot be very far off.
Go there, grannie, limping and leaning on thy staff !
Listen to the hen cackling. She says : kowe, kowe, kowe. (3)

[222] (1) They compare themselves to women who have been in the fields, picking kwakwa fruits (p. 17), and are so heavily laden that they cannot carry the hook used for pulling the fruit off the trees ; they have had to tie it to their belt, and drag it behind them on their way home. The travellers give it to be understood that they are not out for pleasure !

(2) That of having to go and see a brother-in-law who ill-treats their sister.

(3) This line is an encouragement to the old woman who finds the walk long and tiring. The other women promise her a fowl at the end of their journey, which the son-in-law will kill for her. Note the first line of the third verse : it is a kind of proverb.

On arriving at the village they stop at the edge of the stream : 585 533 539 574

Fulamelani, bantwanyana, hi ya nwa mati nkobeni.
Stoop down, young women, let us drink water in the valley.

Finally they settle themselves in the home of their *bakoñwana*, their relatives-in-law, and begin to insult their hosts.

Ba yala na wo mbengana loko a boleka !
Ba li : " Famba, u ya teka kwenu u buya wa ta sila ".
Ba yala ni shudana, ba yala ni musana
Ba li : " U ya teka kwenu u buya wa ta tlokola. "
They won't lend (our sister) a grindstone when she wants to borrow one.
They say to her : " Go home and fetch one and then come back and grind. "
They won't lend her the small pestle and mortar.
They say : " Go home and get your own, and then come back and crush your maize. "

Then they make fun of the mother-in-law, who is whispering with the other women of the village, making arrangements, doubtless, for the good entertainment of the visitors. They pretend to discover in these asides some terrible plot.

A li ñwono-ñwono ! Mabulela ya nati lweyi ! Hi file ! Hi lobile !
That woman over there is whispering ! What can she be saying !
We are dead ! We are lost !

As for the head of the village, these shrewish visitors accost him thus :

Ñwenyi wa muti, hi wene ? A ku hi hi mati, hi ñwene ?
A he hlayi wone, ya nhlobo ! Hi hla byala ne sope !
Are you the master of the village ? Are you not going to give us any water to drink ?
We don't mean well-water ; we mean beer and brandy !

The villagers approach to salute the new-comers, who sulk and refuse to say a word. Large pots are made ready for cooking food.

Mi kokela matambeko, mi kokela bamane ?
Kambe hi balala, hi nga ka manyana !
You prepare the large pots... For whom are you making them ready ?
We are enemies, we are !

585 The young folks catch fowls in order to feast them properly
533 They raise objections.
539
574

A hi djyule kwee ! A hi djyule kwee !
Hi djyule nkoka-hi-pindja !
We will have nothing to do with that which cries kwee. (The cry of the fowl when being killed.)
We want the animal which is led with a string (a goat).

But it is the husband who has to put up with the worst insults.

Ha ! matinga-tingela ya nhunu lwe ! Loko a hi bona a ku tlhanya psirubu.
Ah ! see how he wants to avoid us ! As soon as he sees us he runs and hides behind the houses ! (He is afraid of us !)
Hi laba tima-mbilu ! hi djyula mafura ya ku nona phobo.
We want something to satisfy the heart ! We must have our fat very rich !
Nyoka ya nyoka ! Mbyana ya mbyana ! Yi whee !
Serpent that thou art ! Dog that thou art ! Thou sayest bow-wow !

Then to show him that they really like and appreciate him, they add, with the true untutored rudeness which they maintain to the end of the visit :

A ku hi lobolele ? Na wene, bana ba ku ba ku lobolela ki khume ni ntlhanu !
Won't you buy another wife from us ! Later on your daughters will bring you a dowry worth fifteen pounds sterling !

Finally, after having had plenty to eat and to drink and a good dance, they will remark, on leaving :

Hi tlhome nyonga ya mbuti, hi muka
Twine the goat's bladder in our hair, that we may go home.

All this is not very high-flown poetry. The general intercourse between relatives-in-law is by no means refined and this rudeness contrasts with the ordinary civility of Native life. Let us remember that this way of speaking is not intended to show a want of politeness on the part of the visitors, but, on the contrary, is the behaviour suited to the occasion ! I have the music of some of these songs, which were noted down by Mrs Audéoud, in Maputju. In No. 13, the bridesmaids actually exhort the bride not to follow her husband ! But they are the last to expect her to follow their advice.